



OPTIONS CENTER HEALTH TOPIC



CHRONIC FATIGUE & IMMUNE DYSFUNCTION SYNDROME (CFIDS)

The root cause of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome has not yet been clearly identified. Possible contributing factors have included: Epstein-Barr virus, Lyme disease, Candidiasis (yeast overgrowth), Mycoplasmas (a microorganism smaller than a bacteria and larger than a virus), heavy metal toxicity, or even food allergies. Whatever the cause, it is apparent the immune system is involved and, thus, the evolution of the name, Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction Syndrome (CFIDS).

CFIDS is marked by severe fatigue and must be accompanied by 4 of 8 possible symptoms that have existed for a minimum of 6 months. The symptoms include:

- ✓ short-term memory problems
- ✓ sore throat
- ✓ tender/swollen lymph nodes
- ✓ muscle pain
- ✓ multi-joint pain
- ✓ headaches
- ✓ sleep difficulties
- ✓ post-exertion fatigue lasting 24 hours or more

It is important that other causes of fatigue be ruled out. These other causes include: anemia, Lyme disease, heart problems, and liver problems (i.e. hepatitis).

The number of people diagnosed with CFIDS is estimated at nearly 1,000,000 people in the U.S. This number does not include numerous others who go undiagnosed and therefore do not get treatment. Women are three times more likely to develop this condition than men. For women the likelihood of developing this condition is equal to the chance of getting Multiple Sclerosis (MS) or Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE/Lupus) and four times greater than contracting HIV.

There appear to be four common underlying physical changes that occur in most people with CFIDS. The first is a drop in the function of the immune system. This is typically related to a stressor: a mental or emotional event, a physical trauma or infection, or a chemical exposure. This typically marks the onset of the noticeable symptoms. Long before the trigger occurs, however, the body has lost its capacity to respond appropriately to stress.

The second physical change involves the adrenal glands, which produce hormones (cortisol and DHEA) to help our bodies respond to stress. Over time the adrenals become depleted. Production of cortisol/DHEA falls off and this can lower the immune system and cause extreme fatigue. The third common underlying change occurs in the digestive system. The integrity of the intestinal lining allows food to pass into the body while blocking toxins from getting in. This lining breaks down due to stress and allows toxins in (often referred to as “leaky gut”). The final change is seen in the liver as it is overwhelmed with the increasing toxins that are flooding into the bloodstream.

The most effective approach to treating CFIDS is multifaceted. It requires the support of the immune, hormone, digestive, and detoxification systems through diet, lifestyle changes, and nutritional supplementation. When these are properly addressed, improvement is often seen. Some even see eventual resolution of the condition.

Source: Nutritional Efficacy Connection Health Services

Evaluations & Corrections

- ✓ A simple saliva test can assess the function of the adrenal glands and their ability to respond to stress. It is possible to assess the mucosal immune system and the protective GI barrier with a saliva sample.
- ✓ Low blood sugar events, such as skipping meals or eating a high carbohydrate meal that is followed by a “sugar crash,” will deplete the adrenals’ ability to respond to stress and subsequently lower immune function. It is important to not go more than 3-4 hours without eating and to include some protein with every meal or snack!
- ✓ Chronic, hidden infections in the GI tract will lead to a breakdown in the intestinal lining, lower the immune response and eventually cause leaky gut. Common infections include: parasites, H. Pylori bacteria, and oral infections found in the mouth under fillings and crowns. A **GI Health Panel** can be done to identify allergies, infections, and parasites that can cause these problems. The report determines what dietary recommendations and supplements will be suggested.